

*Cilibe impressifrons*, n. sp.

Oblong- or elongate-oval; ordinarily black, the elytra sometimes dark brown, the entire insect sometimes reddish brown; most nitid on the prothorax; rather convex: head rather long, rather finely and closely punctured; a distinct, transverse, slightly bowed impression across the front between the eyes: epistoma broadly truncated in front, the suture rather strongly marked and angulate at the sides; prothorax very finely and, on the middle, remotely punctured; a strong angulate impression at each side close to the basal margin, and sometimes an obscure transverse impression between them; apex moderately emarginate; anterior angles subacute, directed forwards; sides more or less regularly rounded, more contracted anteriorly than posteriorly, occasionally a little sinuous before the front angles; hind angles more or less (sometimes almost imperceptibly) outwardly produced, acute; lateral margins very slightly expanded, a little concave, the edges moderately and almost uniformly thickened: elytra oblong-oval, feebly sinuous at the base; shoulders more or less distinctly rounded; punctuation, &c. almost as in *C. tibialis*, but the interstices, especially at the sides, are more distinctly rugulose; expanded lateral margins narrow, almost obsolete (or strongly narrowed) at the base, scarcely perceptibly continued to the apex, a little concave, the edges sometimes slightly reflexed at the base: markings on the underside similar, but much feebler, to those in *C. tibialis*; legs, antennæ, and epipleural fold reddish piceous; anterior tibiæ acute (but not at all dentiform) at the outer apical angle.

Length  $6\frac{1}{2}$ –8 lines; width of elytra  $2\frac{1}{2}$ – $3\frac{2}{3}$  lines.

*Hab.* New Zealand. Five examples.

The oblong or elongate-oval form, the transverse impression between the eyes, the almost smooth prothorax in contrast with the somewhat coarsely sculptured elytra, the scarcely expanded sides of the prothorax, and the lateral expanded margins of the elytra obsolete at the base, will serve to distinguish this species.

[To be continued.]

LVI.—On the Great Northern Falcons.  
By ALFRED NEWTON, M.A., F.R.S., &c.

To the Editors of the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*.

GENTLEMEN,

The much-debated matter of the Great Northern Falcons has so confessedly received its chief elucidation from papers

in your Journal and its predecessor, that I beg the favour of making a few observations on Mr. Sharpe's recently published remarks (Proc. Zool. Soc. 1873, pp. 414-419), in which he has reopened the question thought by the best-informed ornithologists to have been settled nineteen years ago by Mr. John Hancock (Ann. & Mag. N. H. ser. 2, xiii. pp. 110-112). Such of your readers as take any interest in the subject are aware that, in 1833, Mr. Hoy (Mag. N. H. vi. pp. 107-110) pointed out the distinctness of the Norwegian form, to which the name of Gyrfalcon properly applies; and that, in 1838, Mr. Hancock (Ann. N. H. ii. pp. 241-250) established the difference of the two birds which mainly have their respective homes in Iceland and Greenland, being, however, accidentally led into a pardonable error, which he afterwards (*loc. secundò cit.*) corrected. This error was one prevalent at the time, and even subsequently, among those who had had but few opportunities of observing (or of knowing from those who had observed it) the fact that these Falcons assume their mature plumage at the first moult. This fact has been proved by repeated and continuous observations, carried on not only in this country but abroad, and not only in zoological gardens, where inattention to the requirements of the captives might not impossibly affect the due course of nature, but in falconers' mews, where the birds are kept in the very highest state of health and condition. It is, however, denied by Mr. Sharpe, who falls back on the old and, I may say, exploded belief that these Falcons continue to change the character of their plumage as they advance in age. I have read his paper carefully, and he has obligingly allowed me to examine minutely the score of specimens in the British Museum on which he partly rests his theory; but I am unable to find the slightest ground for doubting the truth of Mr. Hancock's statement published, as before mentioned, in this Journal in 1854—a statement, I must add, which is strictly in accordance with the traditions of falconers, than whom, in such a matter as this, there can scarcely be better authorities. Furthermore, I have first and last examined some hundreds of specimens with the same result; for the subject is one in which I have long taken great interest; and I therefore desire to protest against the retrograde opinion now resuscitated by Mr. Sharpe.

I am unwilling to trespass too much on your space, or I would comment on some others of Mr. Sharpe's *dicta* in the same paper. I will content myself with two remarks. "No one," he says, "therefore, can hope to say positively what Holböll's *Falco arcticus* really was." Now this supposed species was long ago perfectly well known; for specimens

received immediately from him, and bearing that name on their labels, existed and perhaps even still exist, though unfortunately not in the British Museum. Several of such specimens I, in former years, have examined (a good many more, indeed, than Mr. Sharpe has ever seen); and I can confirm the suggestion made more than ten years since (*Ibis*, 1862, p. 50, note) that Holböll's *F. arcticus* was founded upon the adults of the Greenland and of the Iceland form, under the mistaken idea that the latter were the young of the former. That Mr. Sharpe's "new species" is "as distinct from the true Iceland Jer Falcon as is the Jer Falcon of Norway," can, I think, be hardly likely; for I have not been able to detect any proportional difference in the Greenland form (*F. candicans*) and the Icelandier (*F. islandus*), while the "new species" is obviously intermediate between them. On the other hand, the difference in proportion between the Icelandier and the real Gyrfalcon (*F. gyrfalco*) is, as I have elsewhere shown (*Yarrell's Brit. Birds*, edit. 4, i. pp. 47, 48), very considerable.

I am, &c.,

ALFRED NEWTON.

Magdalene College, Cambridge,  
November 20, 1873.

LVII.—*Descriptions of three new Species of Asiatic Birds.*

By ARTHUR, Viscount WALDEN, P.Z.S., F.R.S., &c.

*Alcedo rufigastra*, n. sp.

Chin and throat creamy white, washed faintly with rufous; remainder of under surface, the under tail-coverts, and wing-coverts deep bright rufous; spot before the eye rufous, paler in some than in others; feathers of the head black, with a penultimate bright blue band, those of the cheeks all bright blue; back and upper tail-coverts bright blue; wing-coverts black, washed with blue, each feather tipped with bright blue; scapulars and rectrices black, washed with blue.

Wing 2·5 inches, tail 1·62, bill from nostril 1·37.

Described from three male examples obtained in the island of South Andaman by Lieutenant R. Wardlaw Ramsay.

This is a well-marked form, intermediate between *A. moluccensis* and *A. asiatica*. Above it nearly resembles the first; underneath it is undistinguishable from the last.

*Pomatorhinus ochraceiceps*, n. sp.

Lores black; ear-coverts brown, washed with ochreous;